August 28, 2006

Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)
Hedgepeth Dam Removal Project
Sonoma County (WDID# 1B06111WNSO)

On August 8, 2006, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Trout Unlimited (TU) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Restoration Center (NOAA RC), on behalf of Soper-Wheeler Company requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements for the Hedgepeth Dam Removal Project in Sonoma County, California. The proposed project will disturb Waters of the United States associated with House Creek, a tributary to the Wheatfield fork of the Gualala River, Mendocino Coast Hydrologic Unit No. 113.84.

The proposed project is located in the area of 22331 Skaggs Springs Road, Annapolis, California. There are two project sites, the GPS coordinates (NAD 83) for them are: 38.64417, -123.21467 for the downstream dam; and 38.65133, -123.21141 for the upstream dam. The purpose of the project is to remove the concrete abutments for two flashboard dams on House Creek, thereby providing unimpeded access to over five miles of habitat for steelhead and other aquatic organisms.

Before construction, all fish and amphibians in the project areas will be relocated by a qualified biologist and a temporary screened water diversion will be installed to divert stream flow around each construction site. The temporary water diversion dams will be created upstream of each construction site to divert stream flow around the construction areas. Temporary diversion dams will be made of clean gravel and covered with Visqueen to minimize water seepage into the construction area. The Visqueen will be firmly anchored to the streambed to prevent water seepage. Water diversion screens will be cleaned of debris twice per day, to prevent clogging. The cofferdams remain in place and fully functional until the construction is complete.

The work areas will need to be periodically pumped dry of seepage. Water seepage will be pumped upslope to a flat area away from the stream channel and spread across the field with sprinklers. Refueling will take place away from the stream channel and fuel absorbent mats will be placed under the pump during refueling.

When construction is completed at each site, the flow diversion structures will be removed as soon as possible in a manner that will allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate.

The existing farm roads will be used for staging, however, limited encroachment into riparian areas will be needed to provide access to the work sites. No riparian trees will be removed or disturbed as a result of the project construction; Approximately 200 feet of stream channel will be disturbed at each site.

Heavy equipment (excavator and ram arm) will be used to break up and remove the dams and gravel sediment and to haul the debris away. An excavator will create a

temporary access road into the stream channel near each dam. Small amounts of concrete dust will be generated by the destruction of the dams. Stream flow will be diverted around each construction site to prevent discharge to the flowing water. All concrete and other project debris will be temporarily stored in a construction staging area near each dam site, then hauled to an offsite disposal area.

After each dam has been removed, gravel and sediment likely to mobilize during winter storms will be excavated and hauled offsite. Approximately 500 cubic yards of material will be excavated from the lower dam site and 200 cubic yards of material will be excavated from the upper dam site. Removing the above quantities of sediment and gravel from behind each dam will restore the sites to a more natural geomorphology to improve stream flow. In addition, sediment excavation will minimize turbidity related to stream channel adjustment immediately after construction and during winter storm events.

Erosion Control BMPs will be used prior, during and after construction to reduce sediment discharge and stabilize disturbed areas.

The California Department of Fish and Game, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this project qualifies for a Negative Declaration pursuant to CEQA.

The Hedgepeth Dam Removal Project is scheduled to begin as soon as the permits are issued and end before October 15, 2006. Staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act Authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Johncaleb Sarsfield at (707) 576-6728 or at jsarsfield@waterboards.ca.gov or Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 or at sbargsten@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The related documents and comments received are on file and may be inspected or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Blvd., Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.